

# First Aid

BY MARGARET BUSBEE SHIPP

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"OPIUM poisoning is easy to remember if you just keep in mind that the key letter is 'p.' Symptoms—purple face, pin-point pupils, pulse slow, possible smell of paregoric. Treatment—pour down emetic till it acts profusely; plenty of coffee."

"But, Joan, two people should walk the man up and down," reminded Lila, who was of a literal turn of mind and could recite her first-aid lessons verbatim.

"Propel patient between a pair of persons, Lila," was Joan's improved version. "Now for carbolic poisoning the nearest key letter is 'e.'"

She thought a moment and improvised:

"Ease your mouth with alcohol if you've burned it sore;  
Mix with equal parts of water and gulp table-spoonfuls four;  
Follow this with Epsom salts, although the dose may bore;  
Then use raw eggs—if stiff the price, a coffin costs lots more!"

The group of girls laughed at the nonsense, but Sally Stephenson groaned:

"How can anybody laugh when the doctor is on his way to us this minute? I always did hate Joan on examinations; she is so cool and debonair when there's a crisis!"

The twenty girls of the first-aid class had gathered at the Woman's Club to take their examination. They had finished the course of lectures, and for weeks their conversation had been limited to their Red Cross text-book.

"Meg and I were catechizing each other this morning," continued Sally. "Just as we were passing a car full of tourists in front of the Lafayette garage, I happened to say, 'I have just been rescued from

drowning, and my shoulder-blade is broken, and I'm unconscious, and what are you going to do about it?' Meg was silent, thinking up the methods of artificial respiration. 'Hurry up,' I went on; 'every minute counts! Can't you see that I'm suffocated and my skin is blue?' We suddenly realized that the tourists were staring at me pityingly, and one said, 'Poor little young thing!' She evidently thought I was insane, and that Meg was my nurse."

"Meg's specialty will be the esthetic department," said Joan wickedly, tucking her arm through her best friend's. "Her idea of nursing is to wheel a fascinating convalescent through a gay garden."

"I'm sure I know the difference between apoplexy and alcoholic poisoning, and they are unesthetic enough," retorted Meg. "I was thinking to-day how thrilling it would be if a policeman arrested an old white-haired man for drunkenness, and I should pass by, point out the inequality of his pupils and the insensitiveness of his eyeballs, refuse to let the man go to jail, and take him to the hospital!"

Joan looked at her with affectionate amusement.

"Go on, Meg. You know you've planned for him to be the father of a young man with a Montgomery Flagg chin, who would adore you at sight for having saved his father's illustrious name from the police-court records."

"Please stop talking foolishness, Joan! I'm getting all mixed up," fretted Lila. "Right this minute I can't remember how that man would breathe if he had apoplexy."

She opened her book to make sure.

"The breathing won't trouble you, girls, if you'll remember Joan's 'Table for Cor-

rect Breathing,'” said Meg, and quoted a verse:

“If you're shocked, breathe shallow;  
In faint or sunstroke, sigh;  
In apoplexy, you must snore,  
But with morphin, breathe full and slower  
And slower till you die.”

“Joan's patients have one thing in common—they all die,” commented Lila solemnly.

The door swung open to admit the two doctors who were to hold the examination. There were written questions and oral questions and practical demonstrations, so that it was three hours later before the class was leaving, with spirits entirely subdued.

“Won't you come with me, Joan?” Meg asked. “The car's here.”

“No, thank you, Meg. Dr. Barre is coming for me.”

“I'll stay with Miss Joan until he comes,” promised Dr. Flynn.

Only ten minutes passed before Barre put in his appearance, but minutes seem longer when one is waiting, and Joan's sense of annoyance was uppermost. She nodded a casual greeting to Barre and thanked Dr. Flynn.

“I'm sorry to have been a few minutes late, Joan,” Barre explained as they walked away together. “A man was brought into the hospital who had been badly hurt.”

“One *always* is brought in,” she answered wearily. “It isn't your fault, Roger, that you are invariably late for our engagements, except when you break them altogether. Nor do I honestly blame myself for being vexed. Of course, if I were superhuman, like mother, I shouldn't mind having plans changed at the last minute, and going unescorted to places, and never having the comfortable feeling that there is some one to look out for my pleasure.”

Barre's face lighted with the flamelike enthusiasm which was his charm.

“Your mother is the most wonderful wife a surgeon ever had!”

Joan was tired and nervous from the strain of the examination.

“I don't even *wish* to be like mother,” she said abruptly. “I want a life of my own. Mother's is so mixed up with father's

that she never thinks of herself as an individual, never wants anything for herself except to make him happy. He worships her. I told them the other day that they had kept the first freshness of their feeling about each other because they had never been together enough to get very well acquainted. They laughed, and looked at each other. You know that deep, steadfast expression in mother's eyes.”

Barre drew in his breath sharply.

“To see just that look dawn in your eyes, Joan, is the whole hope and meaning of life to me!”

“Don't!” she pleaded. “Ever since I was seventeen I've told mother that the most terrible thing that could happen to me would be to marry one of the young doctors in father's hospital. You know there's been a perfect fatality about it—” She stopped short.

“You mean about their falling in love with you, dear? Yes, I was warned as soon as I got here that my three predecessors had succumbed to Joanitis.”

“When mother and dad had their twenty-fourth wedding anniversary last month”—Joan's face was sober—“mother said it was the third time in all those years father hadn't been obliged to be at the hospital or out of town that evening. It's tragic he hasn't a son to inherit his gift. Dear dad! He was perfectly delighted when I began these first-aid lessons, although I explained that I only did it because Meg and Sally wouldn't take the course unless I did. When the doctor told him that I had the best lessons in the class, what do you imagine father said? ‘*Of course!*’ I didn't have the heart to tell him that in spite of three generations of surgeons, when the girls spoke of the grating sound of *crepitus* it made rabbits run all over my grave, and that the chapter on bleeding made me so faint that poor Meg had to rush for ice-water. I hate it, I hate everything about it! I abhor broken bones and hideous burns and diseases and complaining voices, and all that morbid, *whimpering* part of life! Good night, Roger—I'm horrid and cross. Don't come in to-night.”

She felt smitten with compunction when she was alone in her room.

"He looked so tired when the porch-light fell on his face. I didn't even ask him about the accident, and with dad out of town the whole burden of it fell on him. Roger has been at work all day. The only time that has really belonged to him was that little walk with me, and I spoiled it!"

She looked at the photograph on her dressing-table—a clean, clear-cut, ardent face—and she told it defiantly:

"I shall not marry a surgeon. But if you were a dray-driver, or a coal-miner, or anything else, giving you a few hours' freedom that you could depend on, I should be tempted to spend them with you, Roger Barre!"

Barre was not looking half so much cast down as Joan was supposing as he walked back across the lawn to Dr. Calvert's private hospital. His was the sanguine temperament which "finds a hope in ill success."

"I wonder if she reads herself right, or if something deep and strong and hidden in her isn't kicking against the pricks!" he speculated. "Dr. Calvert said the other day that she had the typical surgeon's hand, deft and quick and firm."

Then he forgot her hands, thinking of the blueness of her eyes.

## II

SOMETIMES the Puritan strain of her mother's people dominated Joan's Southern inheritance, and always it kept her from coquetry. She was inherently honest, and it was with the determination to face her problem that she went alone for a long tramp in the woods the next morning. Because Roger was every day dearer to her, she was the more determined not to hurt his life.

She tramped on unheedingly, until the gentle loveliness of the spring wooed her recognition. The hillside was covered with tiny blue iris, crowfoot violets, dainty spears of wild alum, and the tender green of young ferns, while overhead were white dogwood blossoms or the pink boughs of a tardy redbud.

"It is so beautiful!" she murmured. "I don't believe Roger has had a chance to take a long walk in the woods this spring.

He doesn't realize that leisureliness is lovely in itself, and that a life which lacks leisure is an overcrowded thing—like a landscape without space."

Joan was trying to reach a branch of dogwood when her attention was arrested by a catbird's note, and she turned to find that it was a boy's clever whistling. He was a personable little chap with friendly eyes and an engaging smile. He was pushing a bicycle along the narrow foot-path. Joan's weakness was for small boys, and she took an immediate fancy to the freckles on his nose.

"I was sure you were a catbird," she laughed. "Not much place for riding in these thick woods!"

"I like to walk through 'em, and then I ride faster when I get to the road to make up. Want me to get that dogwood for you?"

"You can't. I've tried to reach it with a stick to pull it down, but it's ever so much too high for me."

The dogwood in question grew under a hickory. The boy quickly climbed up the hickory, hung by his legs from a branch with amazing agility, broke off the bough, and let it fall to the ground.

"You frightened me to death!" exclaimed Joan, when he was safe on the ground again. "I didn't know what you were going to do until you swung off from that upper limb, and then I didn't dare utter a sound for fear it would make you lose your grip."

The boy approved her with candid eyes.

"Lots of girls screech when they're scared," he remarked contemptuously. "I've got a sister—she ain't but ten, and I'm 'leven, goin' on twelve—and she screeches over bugs, rats, dogs, snakes, cows, and caterpillars. I bet you ain't a 'fraid-cat!"

Joan debated the point seriously.

"I'm scared of blood," she admitted. "I was scared when you hung head downward from that limb."

"That warn't nothin'!" he boasted. "I can skin up any tree. Reckon I orter be goin' on. I've got to go to Timmons's store to get ma some bakin'-sody, and it's a right smart piece from here."

"Aren't you going to tell me your name? I want to know who gave me my lovely dogwood."

"I'm named Benjermine Franklin Bisco, but all the folks calls me 'Sonny'!"

"Of course they do!" said Joan warmly. "Good-by, Sonny!"

She waved a hand to him as he trundled his wheel along the path until the thick trees hid him from sight.

With a dull feeling of depression she wandered on. The woods had whispered of their peace, but had failed to impart it.

Presently the path joined a country road, on which Joan saw an automobile coming toward her. The vehicle was swinging from side to side, describing so needless a zigzag that she surmised immediately that its solitary occupant must be drunk.

Then she saw a boy on a bicycle, holding to the car with one hand to be pulled along. As he passed her she recognized that it was Sonny Bisco, doubtless on his way back from the store. She called to him to let go, but the car passed too rapidly for him to hear.

Then, as she looked after him, something terrifying happened. She never could describe it clearly, but the car wheeled completely around, raising a cloud of dust, and stopping in a shallow ditch. The boy and the bicycle were in a heap on the road.

### III

JOAN ran to the spot in an agony of terror. What she saw curiously stilled her. The sleeves of Sonny's blouse were rolled up almost to the shoulder, and though she had never seen arterial bleeding before, there was no mistaking that bright red, spurting blood.

"His life is in my hands!" she thought in a flash so swift that it was hardly conscious reflection. "I must remember exactly what I've learned to do."

Kneeling by his side, she tried to put her fingers at the point of pressure, to check the bleeding momentarily. The tipsy man, dazed and half-sobered by the turn of events, had climbed out of the car.

"I've killed him!" he whimpered. "I swear I didn't see him. He must have run out from the side of the road!"

An immense compassion surged over the girl; he, too, needed help.

"No, you haven't killed him." Her voice was kind and firm, as one speaks to a child—as she had often heard her father speak to nerve-racked women. "You are going to help me save him. I want you to take the inner tube from that tire."

He obeyed her slowly and clumsily.

"Now put it here by me and get me that stick. No, not that one, the short one. Thank you!"

She relaxed the pressure. The sudden spurt of blood went all over her face and hair as she bent over the unconscious boy, feeling for the strong biceps muscle, which must be grasped and pulled to one side in order to press the brachial artery against the bone. She put a fresh handkerchief over the point of bleeding; then, using the end of the inner tube for a pad, she made a tourniquet, twisting the stick between the layers. She tore a strip from her petticoat to tie it in place.

It seemed an endless time—an eternity ticked in heart-beats—as she waited for that bright flow to cease.

"See, the blood has nearly stopped," she said to the man, her parched lips speaking with difficulty. "Now you must go for the doctor. Go straight to Dr. Calvert's hospital—you know where it is?"

He nodded.

"Sure! Everybody knows the doc."

"I'm his daughter. Tell Dr. Barre what has happened, and to hurry to me on the Whitaker Woods road. Now, listen once more: At the very first house you pass tell the woman in it that Sonny Bisco is badly hurt. She must come here and bring some blankets and two hot stove-lids, and leave a kettle of water on the stove to boil."

After the man had managed to get his light car out of the ditch and had driven down the road, Joan was free to treat the further injury which she had seen at the first glance, but which had to wait until the bleeding was checked. For the boy's arm hung limp, and just above the elbow the bone had buttonholed its way through the flesh.

She took off her petticoat and tore it into strips. Looking about her for a splint, she

found that her brain was mechanically repeating the list she had learned in her lessons:

"Pieces of wood, broom-handles, laths, rules, squares, wire netting, heavy cardboard, umbrellas, canes, pick-handles, spades, blanket-rolls, rifles, swords, and bayonets."

It had seemed a comprehensive list, but none of those articles was in sight, and she was obliged to use a piece of pine bark. She padded it with the strips torn from her skirt, and then bandaged it to the bend of the elbow, supporting the forearm with a sling. Every cell of her brain was crucially aware of the patient's profound unconsciousness, yet she did not dare leave him to go in search of aid. Sweeter than the first bird-note of spring was the shuffle of approaching footsteps, and no Caruso song could have sounded so musical as the nasal, drawled query:

"Be you the woman that sent a drunk man after my stove-lids?"

"Yes. Did you bring them?"

"Here they be, wropped up in the blanket. He allowed Sonny Bisco was hurt."

Wrapping up the hot lids in what was once a hand-embroidered skirt-ruffle, Joan applied them to the boy's feet and covered him with the blanket. She slipped her hands under it to rub his limbs.

"He was knocked down by a car, and the man has gone for the doctor. Did you put on the water to boil? Won't you please go back, and as soon as it boils fill two or three bottles with water and bring them to me, and a glass of cool water for Sonny Bisco to drink?"

The woman hesitated.

"Sonny's ma lives about half a mile down the road. Hadn't I better go there fust and tell her he's 'most dead? I can stop by his Aunt Maria's, too. 'Tain't much out of the way."

"Sonny needs the water-bottles first, and then you can tell his mother."

It needed the warmth of the hot bottles, which took the place of the stove-lids, as well as steady rubbing, before the boy came back to dazed consciousness, sipped a little cool water, and then closed his eyes again.

"I don't know what else to do," thought Joan with quiet despair, as she rubbed on steadily. "If the drunken man doesn't find Roger—"

A far cloud of dust on the road made her recall how she had thrilled as a child while *Sister Anne* waited for the brothers to bring help to *Bluebeard's* wife.

Now the dust-cloud resolved itself into a car—a gray car—Roger's car!

#### IV

SPRINGING from the machine, Roger saw at first only Joan's face—the dried blood caked on it, minute clots in her bright hair, her shirt-waist bloody and dirty.

"My darling, my darling, are you hurt?"

"No. Sonny was struck by a car, and his brachial artery was cut, and there's a compound fracture. I do not know how long since it happened; it seems some time. He has been conscious once, and has sipped a little water. Can I help you lift him into the car?"

"I can manage alone better, dear." He laid the boy flat on the rear seat and pulled down one of the smaller seats for her. "Sit there and hold him as still as you can, Joan."

"Thank you for helping us," Joan said to the woman. "Now, please go to Sonny Bisco's mother and tell her that her boy has had his arm broken, that he has been taken to Dr. Calvert's hospital, and that his daughter will come out here in a car this afternoon and bring her in to see her son, and that she mustn't be frightened. We shall do everything for him."

Roger turned to Joan and stared at her in amazement. That quiet voice, that gentle calmness, were as familiar to him as daily association with Dr. Calvert could make them.

Just then the girl's face quivered with feeling as she said:

"Please hand me that bough of dogwood. Sonny broke it for me, and I can't bear to leave it in the dusty road."

When they reached the hospital, the first person they saw was Dr. Calvert, who had just come in from the train. His finely earnest face was grave with anxiety as he kissed Joan. He had been told that his

daughter had been alone in the woods and had found a badly injured boy.

Sonny was carried into the emergency room. When the two doctors returned to Joan half an hour later, they found her sitting just where they had left her, immovable, waiting, the withered dogwood in her lap.

"Will he live?" The question was barely articulate.

"Yes, daughter. You saved him. He is very weak from the loss of blood, but you saved him." Intense fatherly pride surged into Dr. Calvert's voice. "You did *exactly* right! That muscle is hard to find. Your dear unskilled hands—I have always told you they were surgeon's hands. You were right about the tourniquet; it was just as your grandfather or I might have done, though we might not have thought of the stove-lids." He smiled unsteadily. "Now take this girl home to her mother, Barre; she's tired out."

"Oh, father, father!" Joan cried in a voice thrilling with happiness. "I never was so little tired in my life; I never was so happy!" She stammered in her eagerness. "Oh, dad, you know how I love you, yet neither you nor Roger mattered by—by Sonny Bisco! I forgot you except as forces that might help him. When the artery stopped bleeding it was different from any moment I had ever known before. It was as if I had been struggling with shadows which were all of my own making, and suddenly found myself in a cleared place. You know that I've always been squeamish over the sight of blood—tiny pin-pricks, even—but that terrible spurting red stopped being blood. It was a little boy's life!"

The eyes of father and daughter met in absolute understanding. Roger had his revelation; Joan was her father's child, and the forces in him which had made him consecrate his life to the service of humanity had fought in her—and conquered.

"I must get back to work, little girl. Barre, please tell my wife this child needs a warm bath, a cup of tea, and some petting."

The two walked across the wide grounds to the Calvert home.

"You are like your father, Joan. I had never seen it before, because your hair and eyes are just the color of your mother's. She's lucky! When Dr. Calvert prescribes petting, she'll carry it out faithfully; but if I want to tell you how proud I am of you, I'll have to telephone or write. You've been magnificent, dearest!"

"I'm strong as a pine-knot, but I'm utterly ignorant, Roger. You'll have to be patient with me and teach me how to help you."

"You mean," he cried, trembling from the sheer joy of it, the flamelike enthusiasm Joan loved in him leaping into his face, "you mean we are to have our lives together, Joan?" With quick indignation at himself he broke off. "There, don't answer now, sweetheart. It's unfair to ask you when you are worn out and tired."

"And I haven't the slightest intention of answering you when I'm all mussed up like this," she retorted. "But this afternoon, when I'm fresh and nice again, you may drive me out to Mrs. Bisco's, and perhaps I may tell you then."

She looked up at him with a glance he knew—steadfast and deep and sure.

"You—you are your mother's daughter, too! Oh, my love, how incredibly sweet life is!"

## V

HOWEVER, the next morning's paper found no difficulty in summing up the "incredible" events in two commonplace little paragraphs:

Benjamin Bisco was knocked down by a car driven by Charles Murdock yesterday, and his arm was broken. Though disclaiming any liability for the accident, it is understood that Mr. Murdock has placed five hundred dollars to the boy's credit in the People's Bank. The little fellow is resting comfortably in the Calvert Hospital.

Dr. and Mrs. John Seldon Calvert announce the engagement of their daughter, Joan Seldon, to Dr. Roger Barre. The engagement is one of unusual interest because of the prominence of the contracting parties. The marriage will take place quietly the first week in June. Dr. Calvert and Dr. Barre have put their hospital at the service of the government for use in any way that may be desired, and Miss Calvert is to go on with her training as a Red Cross Auxiliary nurse.